DOUGLAS-FIR TUSSOCK MOTH

Orgyia pseudotsugata (McDunnough)

Hosts--Douglas-fir, all true firs, and spruce.

Distribution-- May be found throughout host ranges.

Damage-- Young larvae feed on underside of new foliage causing needles to shrivel and die. Later in season, older needles are fed upon. When populations are high, entire tree may be defoliated and killed.

Figure 169. A mature Douglas-fir tussock larva has "tussocks" of hair on its back.

Identification-- This is one of the easiest forest pests to identify because some obvious signs of its presence are apparent the entire year. Look on trees for hairy cocoons and eggs in a mass of frothy, gelatinous substance covered with hairs (fig. 170a) from August until May. Look for hairy larvae from late May until August on foliage. First instars are gray with long hairs. Later instars develop four dense tussocks (brushes) of yellow-brown hairs on their backs. Mature larvae are up to 1-1/4 inches long, have two long, dark tufts or "pencils" (horns) of hair just back of the head, a similar but longer "pencil" on the posterior end, four tussocks on their backs, and the rest of the body is covered with short hairs radiating from red, button-like centers (fig. 169). Moths emerge in August and wingless females lay their eggs on top of their cocoons (fig. 170b).

Similar damages-- Early damage and webbing in trees may be similar to that caused by western spruce budworm. Larvae are very distinct, however.

References-- 2, 22, 76

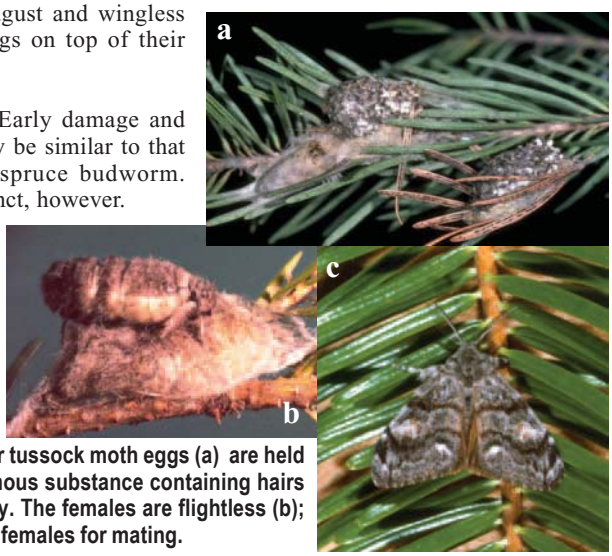

Figure 170. Douglas-fir tussock moth eggs (a) are held in masses by a gelatinous substance containing hairs from the female's body. The females are flightless (b); the males (c) fly to the females for mating.